

**Soi Lek is 'ignorant and arrogant', says Anwar**  
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has dismissed Chua Soi Lek as “ignorant and arrogant” over the MCA chief’s negative depiction of Muslim countries.

Anwar, who is PKR supremo, said he would prefer not to label anyone 'anti-Islam', but Chua's comment has made him out to be ignorant of the real situation of Muslim communities everywhere.

national integrity conference anwar lim guan eng 070810 03Referring to Chua's warning to the Chinese community about the danger of voting PAS, Anwar said the opposition campaign to “save Malaysia” was to enable both Muslim and non-Muslim communities to increase their awareness, understanding and respect for each other's religions and cultures.

“I do not want to punish anyone of being anti-(Islam), but he has displayed ignorance and arrogance, and this to my mind, is unacceptable of a party leader in a (ruling) coalition,” he said at a press conference after delivering his speech at the International Integrity Conference 2010 in Penang.

“His (Chua's) interaction with Umno does not seem to make him better understand or appreciative of Muslim concerns,” lamented Anwar.

Yesterday in Kedah, Chua criticised both Umno and PAS for using religion to strengthen their influence over the Malays in their bid to garner support from the community.

Chua said that when the two Malay-Muslim parties compete, the consequence was the implementation of non-progressive policies, which has resulted in the country falling into a middle-income trap over the past 10 years.

He added that Umno has become more conservative to compete with PAS in fishing for Malay votes.

In a posting on his Twitter earlier this afternoon, meanwhile, Chua charged Malaysiakini and The Malaysian Insider as having reported his remarks erroneously.

"Malaysiakini and Malaysian Insider got it all wrong. What I said (was) to quote only from book 'Malaysia and the Club of Doom'. Nothing more, nothing less," said Chua in the tweet.

A meeting point

On a related matter, Anwar praised the initiative taken by the Penang state government to provide a space for both Muslims and non-Muslims to appreciate one another's positive contributions.

“In the same manner, I have been trying to learn the writings of Confucius, read or reread the Ramayana and Mahabharata. To my mind, it is important as these (philosophical works) are very much part of the landscape of our multi-racial and multi-religious country,” he said.

“Leaders must move on and move forward. I think the strength of Pakatan Rakyat is its new politics of appreciating and learning from different races and tribes,” he said.

“Islamic-phobia and strong anti-Islam stance have been expressed by some quarters like (Samuel) Huntington, but to get Malaysian political leaders to display such ignorance is unfortunate,” he added.

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